

Message Text

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ACTION EUR-12

INFO OCT-01 ISO-00 CIAE-00 PM-05 H-01 INR-10 L-03
NSAE-00 PA-01 SP-02 SS-15 NSCE-00 SSO-00 ICAE-00
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O R 031714Z AUG 78
FM AMEMBASSY LISBON
TO SECSTATE WASHDC IMMEDIATE 6570
INFO AMEMBASSY BONN
AMEMBASSY BRUSSELS
AMEMBASSY LONDON
AMEMBASSY MADRID
AMEMBASSY MOSCOW
AMCONSUL OPORTO
AMEMBASSY PARIS
AMCONSUL PONTA DELGADA
AMEMBASSY ROME
USMISSION USNATO
DIA WASHDC
USCINCEUR VAIHINGEN GER
USNMR SHAPE BEL
COMUSFORAZ

C O N F I D E N T I A L SECTION 1 OF 2 LISBON 5777

USEEC

E.O. 11652: XGDS-3
TAGS: PINT PO
SUBJECT: SOCIALISTS COOL TO PRESIDENTIAL ALTERNATIVES

REF: LISBON 5733 (DTG 021753Z AUG 78)

BEGIN SUMMARY: THE SOCIALIST PARTY AUGUST 2 RESPONDED TO
PRESIDENT EANES'S SPEECH BY REJECTING THE POSSIBILITY OF AN
INTER-PARTY AGREEMENT IN THE FEW DAYS ALLOTTED AND BY RAISING
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OBJECTIONS TO BUT NOT RULING OUT A GOVERNMENT OF PRESIDENTIAL
INITIATIVE. THERE IS LITTLE COMMUNICATION BETWEEN THE PRESIDENT
AND THE SOCIALISTS AND BETWEEN THE PS AND THE CDS AT THIS MOMENT.
PROSPECTS FOR A STABLE GOVERNMENT WITH SOCIALIST BACKING ARE POOR IN
THE PRESENT CLIMATE. EARLY ELECTIONS ARE THE UNPOPULAR ALTERNATIVE.

1. THE PS TAKES A TOUGH STAND: THE SOCIALIST PARTY

SECRETARIAT, AFTER AN ALL-DAY MEETING AUGUST 2, RESPONDED TO PRESIDENT EANES'S ADDRESS (REFTEL) ALONG THE FOLLOWING LINES:

-- POINTS OF AGREEMENT: THE SOCIALIST PARTY HIGHLIGHTED EANES'S PRAISE FOR THE TWO SOARES GOVERNMENTS AND FOR THE SOCIALIST PARTY'S CENTRAL ROLE IN PORTUGUESE SOCIETY.

-- POINTS OF DISAGREEMENT: THE PRESIDENT'S FAILURE TO NAME A SUBSTITUTE PRIME MINISTER DEMONSTRATES THAT HIS DECISION TO DISMISS MARIO SOARES AS PRIME MINISTER WAS PREMATURE. THE PS ALSO DISAGREES WITH THE CONSTITUTIONAL GROUNDS USED TO DISMISS SOARES.

-- THE VARIOUS ALTERNATIVES: THE PRESIDENT'S SPEECH POINTS TOWARD A GOVERNMENT OF PRESIDENTIAL INITIATIVE AS THE ONLY VIABLE ALTERNATIVE - THE PS DOES NOT AGREE. THE SOCIALISTS REMAIN FAITHFUL TO THEIR AGREEMENT WITH THE CDS, BUT WILL NOT RENEGOTIATE A NEW AGREEMENT TO GIVE THE CDS WHAT THE CENTRISTS COULD NOT OBTAIN BY PROVOKING THE CRISIS IN THE FIRST PLACE. THE PS DOES NOT AGREE WITH THE PRESIDENT'S INSISTENCE ON A GOVERNMENT WITH MAJORITY SUPPORT IN THE ASSEMBLY AND DOES NOT UNDERSTAND CLEARLY THE PROPOSAL FOR A POLITICAL AGREEMENT OF PRESIDENTIAL INITIATIVE ADVANCED IN EANES'S SPEECH. THE PS BELIEVES THAT PRESIDENTIAL INVOLVEMENT IN PARLIAMENTARY LIFE WOULD RESULT IN EXCESSIVE CONCENTRATION OF POWER IN THE HANDS OF ONE MAN.

-- ALTERNATIVES IGNORED: WHY DID THE PRESIDENT NOT EXPLORE OTHER POSSIBILITIES INCLUDING GOVERNMENTS COMPOSED OF ALL PARTIES WITH PARLIAMENTARY REPRESENTATION OR BASED ON THE LARGEST

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PARTY TO PREPARE THE COUNTRY FOR ELECTIONS?

-- CONCLUSIONS: THE PS SEES NO POSSIBILITY OF CONCLUDING INTER-PARTY AGREEMENTS IN THE FOUR TO FIVE DAYS ALLOWED, UNLESS THE CDS ACCEPTS REIMPOSITION OF THE PS-CDS AGREEMENT. THE PRESIDENT SHOULD DESIGNATE IMMEDIATELY A PRIME MINISTER BASED ON THE ELECTION RESULTS WHO SHOULD FORM A GOVERNMENT AND PRESENT A PROGRAM TO THE LEGISLATIVE ASSEMBLY. THE PS PLACES ITSELF "AT THE PRESIDENT'S DISPOSITION IN A SPIRIT OF LOYAL COOPERATION WITHIN THE TERMS OF THE CONSTITUTION AND IN DEFENSE OF DEMOCRACY."

2. SOCIALISTS REJECT PRESIDENTIAL ALTERNATIVES: SOCIALIST PARTY SECRETARIAT MEMBER RUI MATEUS SAID THE SOCIALISTS HAD SOUGHT TO RETURN THE RESPONSIBILITY FROM THE POLITICAL PARTIES TO PRESIDENT EANES FOR FORMATION OF THE GOVERNMENT. MATEUS SAW NO POSSIBILITY OF A RENEWED PS-CDS AGREEMENT AND BELIEVED THAT ELECTIONS WERE LIKELY BEFORE LONG. THE SOCIALISTS MEANT BY THEIR COMMUNIQUE THAT EANES SHOULD ALLOW THE SOCIALISTS TO DESIGNATE A PRIME MINISTER - PROBABLY NOT MARIO SOARES - TO FORM A SOCIALIST GOVERNMENT OR THAT HE PROCEED TO CHOOSE HIS PRIME MINISTER FOR A GOVERNMENT OF PRESIDENTIAL INITIATIVE. MATEUS SAID THE SOCIALISTS WOULD BAR PARTICIPATION OF THEIR MEMBERS INSUCH A PRESIDENTIAL GOVERNMENT ALTHOUGH THEY

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C O N F I D E N T I A L SECTION 2 OF 2 LISBON 5777

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MIGHT ENCOURAGE INDEPENDENTS CLOSE TO THE SOCIALIST PARTY TO
PARTICIPATE IF THE PS AGREED WITH GOVERNMENT POLICIES. IN
ANY CASE, THE SOCIALISTS WOULD NOT COMMIT THEMSELVES TO A
GOVERNMENT OF PRESIDENTIAL INITIATIVE SINCE THEY EXPECT TO
GO TO NEW ELECTIONS SHORTLY. PS PARLIAMENTARY LEADER
SALGADO ZENHA WAS SOMEWHAT MORE POSITIVE IN AN AUGUST 3 PRESS
INTERVIEW STATING: THE SOCIALISTS ARE SEEKING A CONSTITUTIONAL
AND INTER-PARTY SOLUTION AS LONG AS THE ALLOTTED
TIME PERMITS.
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3. CENTRIST REACTION: THE CENTER DEMOCRAT PARTY MET AUGUST 2 TO RESPOND TO THE EANES SPEECH. THE CDS STATED IT WOULD "COLLABORATE IN ORDER TO AVOID THE PROBLEMS OF EARLY ELECTIONS"; REMAIN OPEN TO A GOVERNMENT OF PRESIDENTIAL INITIATIVE WITH A MAJORITY BASED IN THE PARLIAMENTARY AS LONG AS CERTAIN CDS CONDITIONS ARE MET; AND EXAMINE ANY POSSIBILITY OF AN INTER-PARTY AGREEMENT ON A NEW GOVERNMENT. CDS SAID TIME WAS NOT AS GREAT AN OBSTACLE AS PS RELUCTANCE TO EXAMINE A POSSIBLE AGREEMENT. A CDS INSIDER TOLD EMBOFF THAT HIS PARTY HAD SOUGHT TO OPEN DISCUSSIONS WITH THE SOCIALISTS ON A NEW AGREEMENT WITH NO SUCCESS TO DATE.

4. COMMENT: IT IS CLEAR FROM THE AMBASSADOR'S CONVERSATIONS WITH HENRIQUE GRANADEIRO AUGUST 2 AND DEFENSE MINISTER FIRMINO MIGUEL AUGUST 3, AS WELL AS FROM TALKS WITH THE SOCIALISTS, THAT THE PRESIDENT AND THE SOCIALISTS ARE NOT COMMUNICATING AND ARE BOTH UPSET OVER THE LAST TWO WEEKS' DEVELOPMENTS. EANES IS MEETING WITH THE PSD AND THE CDS AUGUST 3 AT THE PARTIES' REQUEST, BUT THE SOCIALISTS HAVE NOT ASKED TO SEE THE PRESIDENT. WHILE THE SOCIALISTS' TOUGH STANCE MAY STEM IN PART FROM THE NEED TO SET OUT A HARD BARGAINING POSITION, IT WILL BE DIFFICULT TO MAKE ANY PROGRESS TOWARD A STABLE GOVERNMENT WITH SOCIALIST BACKING UNTIL THE ACTORS BEGIN A DIALOGUE. EARLY ELECTIONS ARE THE UNPOPULAR ALTERNATIVE.
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